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quick facts on...

Water Use Permit Renewal Process

Lower West Coast Basin

APRIL 2004

The South Florida Water Management District

is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

Our Mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.

In October 2003, the South Florida Water Management District began renewing more than 4,000 irrigation water use permits throughout its 16-county region. The District will continue renewing permits in regional phases over the next five years. Renewals for basins in the Lower West Coast will proceed as outlined in the table below.

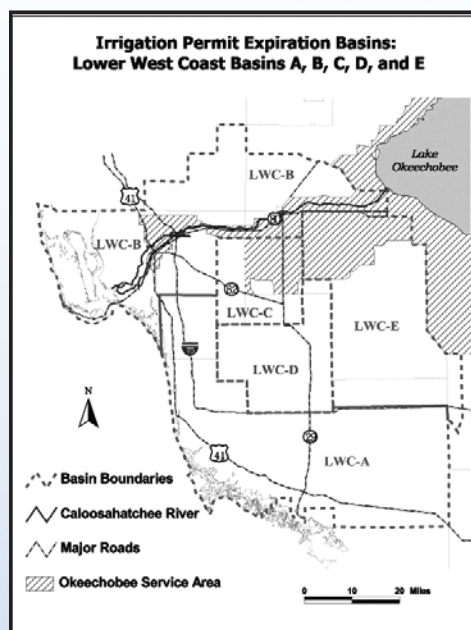
The renewal process consists of the reissuance of the original permit provided no changes in source, irrigated acreage or allocation has occurred since the original permit was issued. If there has been a change, a modification to the permit will be required.

Some permits will be reclassified due to rule changes. An Individual permit is now issued for projects which exceed a use of 15 million gallons per month (MGM) and Major General Permits (GPs) are issued for uses between 3 MGM and 15 MGM. Major GPs require the same forms and information as an Individual Permit, so the renewal process for both will be the same. However, Individual Permits require Governing Board approval, whereas Major General Permits require only staff approval.

The Lower West Coast (LWC) Basin includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties. The basin is further divided into 5 sub-basins (A, B, C, D, E), each having specific permit application and expiration dates.

Applications for renewal may be made pursuant to Rule 40E-1.610 any time within four months prior to permit expiration. Permittees are encouraged to apply for renewal at least 90 days before expiration of the current permit. Once an application is received, an existing permit will remain in force past the expiration date until final agency action on the new application is taken.

Limiting conditions have been updated since the last renewals and call for items not previously required. There are two categories of permit conditions that will be applied to water use permits: 1) standard conditions, which contain general information and operational constraints that apply to all water uses, such as monthly pumpage reports and calibration results and 2) special conditions that address specific considerations such as water quality or water level monitoring. Failure to comply with these limiting conditions may result in substantial fines and potentially the revocation of the water use permit and loss of the right to use water.



Sub-Basins	Basin Application Date	Basin Expiration Date
Basin A	October 30, 2004	February 28, 2005
Basin B	February 28, 2005	June 30, 2005
Basin C	June 30, 2005	October 30, 2005
Basin D	October 30, 2005	February 28, 2006
Basin E	February 28, 2006	June 30, 2006
Lake Okeechobee Basin	June 30, 2007*	October 30, 2007*

*Permittees using sources other than Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River/Canal, Caloosahatchee River or any other waterway connected to Lake Okeechobee may have their permit reviewed concurrently with other applications within the same Irrigation Permit Expiration Basin.

Who needs a renewal? Renewals are required by all Individual and Major General Water Use Permits with a use type of irrigation. This can be landscape, golf course, nursery, livestock or agricultural irrigation.

Why do I need a renewal if I already have a water use permit, and is there a grandfathering clause so I don't have to get a renewal? All Individual and Major General Irrigation permits in the Lower West Coast Basins will expire in 2005-2007. There is no "grandfathering clause." Florida Statutes require all water use permits to be periodically renewed.

What expiration date applies to my project if it crosses multiple basin boundaries? The expiration date for the permit is the date associated with the basin containing the majority of the irrigated acreage. For example, if you have 20 contiguous irrigated acres in LWC Basin A and 75 irrigated acres in LWC Basin B, then you would have the expiration date that applies to LWC Basin B.

How do I get a renewal? The District will provide a notice at least 30 days prior to the basin application date applicable to your project. This notice will include information the District currently has regarding the Water Use Permit for your project. If there are no changes (i.e., land use, source, allocation), the applicant should verify that all the information is accurate and sign and return the form to the District along with the required renewal fee.

If changes to the project have occurred such as the addition of wells or pumps, increase in acreage or allocation or change in land use, can I include these in the renewal process? The applicant will be sent all the information that the District has for the project. The applicant will be asked to verify the information. If changes, such as the ones mentioned above, have occurred which require further review by District staff, the applicant will need to submit the information that has changed. If changes are needed, an Individual/Major General Permit modification must be applied for and the appropriate fee submitted. Forms and instructions can be found on the District Web site at: www.sfwmd.gov/org/reg/wupermit or contact (800) 547-2694 for more information.

What will the renewal cost, and how long is the duration of the permit? Refer to the fee schedule on the Water Use Irrigation Permit Renewals Web page at www.sfwmd.gov. Fees vary based on the allocation amount. The duration of the permit can be up to 20 years depending on the type of permit issued for each project.

What changes can I expect if all of the permit information has remained the same? Older permits may see changes in both the information required to be submitted with the renewal application and in the reporting requirements of limiting conditions.

According to Section 4.1 of the Basis of Review of Water Use Applications, permit applicants must provide the District with results of calibration of the water use accounting method for each well, pump and culvert (if this information has never been submitted to the District) or the results of recalibration every five years (if calibration has been reported to the District). And monthly withdrawals from each well, pump and culvert is reported to the District every three months.

Under the new rules, my permit qualifies for a Major General Permit (3 MGM per month through 15 MGM per month) instead of the previously classified Individual Permit. How does this affect the renewal process? The renewal process for a Major General Permit and an Individual Permit is the same except that for a Major General Water Use Permit there is a shorter review time and the permit is issued by the staff. Visit www.sfwmd.gov/org/reg/wupermit for more information on the different types of permits.

Who is required to use reclaimed water and who do I contact to find out if it is available for my project? According to Section 3.2.3 of the Water Use Basis of Review (BOR), "when reclaimed water is readily available it must be used in place of higher quality water sources, unless it is demonstrated by the applicant that its use is either not environmentally, economically or technically feasible." Agricultural uses involving the growth of edible fruits and vegetables are NOT required to utilize reclaimed water due to potential health issues. All other uses must inquire about the availability of utilizing reclaimed water for their project. Your local Water Utility or Treatment facility can be contacted to inquire whether reclaimed water is available for your project.

Do I need to provide a water conservation plan and what information do I need to provide if required? All Individual Water Use Permits for landscape or golf course irrigation projects need to develop a conservation program including the use of xeriscape principles and the installation of rain sensor devices, automatic switches or other method that can override the operation of the system when adequate rainfall has occurred. This program must be submitted with the permit application.

Where can I get help? For assistance and additional information, call the renewal hotline at (800) 547-2694 or visit the Water Use Irrigation Permit Renewal Web page at www.sfwmd.gov.



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SERVICE CENTERS

Big Cypress Basin
239-597-1505
Broward
954-713-3200
Florida Keys
305-853-3219 or 800-464-5067
Lower West Coast
239-338-2929 or 800-248-1201

Martin/St. Lucie
772-223-2600 or 800-250-4100
Miami/Dade
305-377-7274 or 800-250-4300
Okeechobee
863-462-5260 or 800-250-4200
Orlando
407-858-6100 or 800-250-4250